

[From the New York "Evening Post," April 8, 1902.]

CRUELTY IN WAR.

The Significance of the Courts-Martial in the Philippines—Detailed Description of the "Water Cure"—Other Forms of Torture.

The "Evening Post" has received the following letter from a gentleman in Manila who is vouched for as a person of high character and unimpeachable veracity:

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'EVENING POST.'

"Sir: I am moved to write you by two courts-martial which are now being held here, and of which you will learn by cable long ere my letter reaches you. One of them is convened in Batangas Province to try a Lieutenant Sinclair for wanton cruelty—cruelty, strangely enough, not to a native, but to an American soldier. Just what the facts were cannot, of course, be known, but it seems that the soldier, who had been put into the guard-house for drunkenness, refused to be quiet, but shouted insulting things at the officer in command. In the effort to keep him quiet, the man was, as the charge runs, given the 'water cure,' as a result of which, or the drink, he died. Hence the court-martial.

"The other court-martial is convened in Samar to try an officer, Waller by name, for wanton cruelty to the natives. If these cases are reported to the United States, your readers will no doubt hear much of the water cure, and may wonder what in detail it is.

"The water cure, with other equally devilish tortures, is, of course, a means to an end, and it is justified by the army because, as a means, it succeeds. What is the end? The Administration press, ably seconded by Governor Taft, is loudly declaring that the natives of the islands are, upon the whole, friendly to the Americans, but no one, practically, who is on the ground and who comes in touch with the natives believe this. Here in Manila it takes fines of \$50 to prevail on *cocheros* to haul Americans in their carriages, they preferring to haul Filipinos or Spaniards at less than the rate paid by us. From the deck of a ship in Manila Bay, while still in plain sight of the city, you can see the smoke of burning barrios in Cavité Province, and Laguna Province, with Batangas, the seat of the reconcentration policy in Luzon, are but a few miles away.

"The natives do not love Americans, and with good reason. An army column, out, perhaps, burning barrios, falls in with a native. He may be a villager tilling his garden, or a fisherman. The Americans demand information as to the whereabouts of rifles, the location of insurgent bands in the neighborhood, and their cuartel. Now, the Tagalog is by nature and by training sullen and disinclined to talk, and conversation becomes doubly difficult when questioner and questioned do not speak the same language. The Tagalog knows perhaps one English word, the universally known 'Hello!' and the soldier is equally deficient in Tagalog. Each will know a little Spanish, but not enough to make exchange of ideas even under most favorable circumstances at all easy. A native friendly to the Americans or—God save the mark!—a Macabebe as interpreter, presents awful possibilities for mischief.

"Now, it must not be forgotten that the native who gives to

the Americans information is in an unenviable position. He is not in Manila, or in a garrisoned town where the Americans can protect him, he is among persons unfriendly to our cause; and the friendly native, when he thinks of the gratuitous cruelty of the American soldier, may well hesitate before arousing the antagonism of his Filipino neighbors.


"But he who will not, must be compelled to divulge information. The past masters in the art of torture are the Macabebe scouts, hereditary enemies of the Tagals. Soldiers will tell you with glee of their hellish tortures. Men are tied up by their thumbs; men are pulled up to limbs of trees and fires kindled underneath them, the heat and smoke compelling submission; men are pounded particularly about the chest, for 'you'd be surprised,' said a soldier, 'how few knocks it takes to cause bleeding at the mouth.' Bunches of bamboos tied at one end have the individual rods pushed between the fingers of the hand. When the other end of the bundle is squeezed together the pain is excruciating.

"But the water cure! If the tortures I've mentioned are hellish, the water cure is plain hell. The native is thrown upon the ground, and while his legs and arms are pinioned, his head is raised partially so as to make pouring in the water an easier matter. An attempt to keep the mouth closed is of no avail, a bamboo stick or a pinching of the nose will produce the desired effect. And now the water is poured in, and swallow the poor wretch must or strangle. A gallon of water is much, but it is followed by a second and a third. By this time the victim is certain his body is about to burst. But he is mistaken, for a fourth, and even a fifth gallon are poured in. By this time the body becomes an object frightful to contemplate, and the pain, agony. While in this condition speech is impossible, and so the water must be squeezed out of him. This is sometimes allowed to occur naturally, but is sometimes hastened by pressure and 'sometimes we jump on them to get it out quick,' said a young soldier to me with a smile—a young soldier, a mere boy hardly ten years out of his mother's lap. I did not wonder when an officer, in answer to my question how often he had seen it, said: 'Not often; my feelings too much revolted.' Does it seem possible that cruelty could further go? And what must we think of the fortitude of the native when we learn that many times the 'cure' is twice given ere the native yields? I heard of one who took it three times, and died.

"How often is it given? is a natural question. No one knows. A sergeant told me he had seen it taken by between two and three hundred, by as many as twenty sometimes in a day. Another had seen eighty. An officer saw four, but knew of its happening two hundred times.

"Another phase of the subject merits our attention—the effect upon the American. The unconcerned way in which the soldiers and civilians, too, speak of the water cure, the exulting way in most cases, is the saddest phase of all. The officer's pity for the native undergoing the treatment is the only expression of sympathy for the Filipino I've heard from the lips of a soldier—the only one. These things are not lovely, but they are true.

"MANILA, P. I., *March 6th.*"



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[From the New York "Evening Post," April 9, 1902].

SHAME AND REMEDY IN THE PHILIPPINES.

We have no doubt whatever that the feeling of every American who reads the horrible news from the Philippines is one of burning shame. Our army is disgraced and our national name is smirched by the terrible revelations of the Waller court-martial. Imperialistic newspapers may hide the despatches away on an inside page, and say never a word about them editorially, but there the damning facts stand in the record of the court. Our troops in the island of Samar have been pursuing a policy of wholesale and deliberate murder. They have made of their war simply "the hired assassin's trade." And four United States officers testify that General Smith, chief in command in that island, ordered the practical extermination of the inhabitants. "Kill and burn" were his directions to Major Waller, "and make Samar a howling wilderness." Asked if there was to be any age limit for killing, he answered, so it is sworn, "Everything over ten!" Such was to be the fate of the island third in size of the whole archipelago, with 200,000 professing Christians dwelling on it. And an American General plumes himself on the fact that he ordered the massacre of only the greater part of the population, and did not dash their little ones against a stone!

The thing is done, and we are disgraced in the eyes of the world. Only one shame could be greater, and that would be for Americans not to be ashamed. It seems as if we could not hold up our heads again, such scornful fingers are sure to be pointed at us from every quarter. Imagine Englishmen reading of our meetings to protest against cruelties in South Africa, after this! Even defeated and distracted Spain will retort on us for our own Alvas and Torquemadas outdoing hers. We shall have to rewrite our histories. In Professor Worcester's book on the Philippines, for example, there is an account of a Spanish expedition to Samar in 1649, to capture a revolted chief named Sumoroy. "They failed to take Sumoroy, but found his mother in a hut, and, *true to Spanish traditions*," adds the complacent American historian, "literally tore the defenseless old woman to pieces." In his next edition, Professor Worcester should have an honest foot-note to say that the villainy which the Spanish taught us we executed, and even bettered their instructions, in that same island of Samar.

Tingling shame about all this is not enough. What is to be done? One thing to be done is to put an end to the policy of concealment and silence. The War Department, as we see by the evidence extracted from it about corruption in the transport service, and by the other official proofs of barbarities in the Philippines, which it was keeping dark, will hush up everything if it can. But Congress and the press must not let any of these evil deeds be covered up. Especially would we call upon the religious press to speak out. It has been rejoicing over the door for the gospel opened by our army in the Philippines. If it holds its peace now, it will become a partaker in the blood of those massacred Visayans.

Furthermore, the military authorities, with the Commander-in-Chief, Theodore Roosevelt, at their head, must act speedily and publicly. He issued a manly order to the army the other day, warning soldiers against drunkenness and licentiousness. Surely

he cannot sit by dumb when their superior officers order them to become murderers. What we maintain is that a court-martial for General Smith should be convened instantly, and that, if found guilty of the crimes alleged, he should be shot. General Kitchener has had some of his murderous officers shot for less atrocious acts. We cannot afford to be behind the British in inflicting stern justice upon our assassins who masquerade as soldiers. If General Smith had betrayed a fortress to the enemy, or had broken his sword on the field of battle and fled ignominiously from the foe, his offense would not have been half so black, and would have brought not half so much disgrace on the army and the country, as this campaign of his in Samar, in which he ordered American soldiers to act like wild beasts, red in tooth and claw.

But aside from this pressing duty of restoring the honor and the discipline of the army in the Philippines, and righting, so far as is possible, the hideous wrong that has been done, a larger question blazes before us. Why are we fighting at all in the Philippines, and how long and for what reason is a warfare to be kept up that leads to such an embrutement of our troops? "Of all things in this world," runs an old Greek saying, "war is the last to go according to programme." South Africa and the Philippines are witnesses that it is true. In both regions a Christian nation, a superior race, made war with benevolent and even religious professions, only to find itself led from misery to woe, and from cruelty to barbarism. "Kill first and then negotiate," is the brutal cry of a newspaper in Manila that insults us by calling itself "American." But that is worthy only of Timur or Ghenghis Khan. A Christian ruler, the President of a democracy, is bound to ask if negotiation will not prevent killing. And a suspension of the brutalizing war in the Philippines, with a fresh endeavor to consult the wishes of the inhabitants, is the obvious remedy. A pause and reconsideration of our whole Philippine policy are, in truth, sharply urged upon us by these fresh humiliations. That is the course for which President Schurman argues with great power in the second edition of his little book on "Philippine Affairs." He shows how a true Philippine nationality has been welded even in the furnace-fires that have been of our lighting, and then he concludes, in language worthy of a Christian statesman:

"The sentiment of nationality, wherever it exists, is unquenchable and irresistible. It arms even a weak nation with the might of omnipotence. By it a few hundred thousand Boers have successfully resisted the enormous power of the British Empire for the space of three years. If a general national feeling has emerged among the Filipinos of Luzon and the Visayas, if a new political consciousness with a love of independence has been born, if the sense of a common nationality has begun to exist, then, in the light of such a feeling, and of the combined national action to which the feeling leads, I say it behooves us to pause and consider our whole Philippine policy from beginning to end. For our own hearts tell us that such a national consciousness deserves, and history teaches it will achieve, the national independence to which it aspires."

All persons who feel stirred to a righteous indignation upon reading the foregoing story of crimes committed in the Philippines under the authority of the United States, should promptly carry feeling into practical action by writing personally to the President, the Honorable Secretary of War, and to their representatives in the House and Senate demanding for the honor of the nation the trial and punishment of those who are guilty.

H. W.